

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MANILA FLASH

S E C R E T STATE 092191

EXDIS, FOR CHARGE

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PGOV, RP

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO THE GOP

1. ELECTION RESULTS AND APRIL 8 ARRESTS ARE RECEIVING FRONT-PAGE ATTENTION BY AMERICAN MEDIA. NYTIMES, WASHINGTON POST, AND STAR ALL GAVE ARREST STORY TOP BILLING AND FEATURED PHOTO OF TANADA MAKING GESTURE OF DEFIANCE FROM POLICE VAN WITH OBVIOUSLY DISTRAIGHT WOMAN SEATED NEXT TO HIM. GIST OF MEDIA COVERAGE IS THAT LOSERS IN ELECTION ARE BEING OUTRAGEOUSLY VICTIMIZED.

2. YOU SHOULD SEEK AN APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
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ROMULO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DELIVER THE MESSAGE BELOW. IN DELIVERY THE MESSAGE YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT IT REFLECTS THE THINKING OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THAT IT IS DESTINED FOR MARCOS AS WELL AS ROMULO. THE USG IS VERY CONCERNED OVER RECENT GOP REPRESSIVE ACTIONS, IN LAST DAYS OF CAMPAIGN PERIOD, ON ELECTION DAY AND SUBSEQUENTLY. THE VICE PRESIDENT IS PERSONALLY CONCERNED OVER THE ATMOS-

PHERE WHICH MAY BE CREATED FOR HIS TRIP BY POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS. WE WANT GOP TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

3. THE OBJECTIVE IN HAVING YOU DELIVER THE MESSAGE TO ROMULO IS TO PLAY UPON HIS LONG EXPERIENCE WITH THE U.S.

AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO LEND HIS OWN WEIGHT TO OUR THOUGHTS, WHILE CONVEYING THEM ACCURATELY TO MARCOS. THE DIRECT APPROACH TO MARCOS AT THIS TIME RUNS A GREATER RISK OF PROVOKING AN EMOTIONAL, NEGATIVE REACTION. NEVERTHELESS, WE DO NOT WANT ROMULO OR MARCOS TO UNDERESTIMATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MESSAGE OR THE IMPORTANCE OF GOP ACTIONS IN THE DAYS AHEAD ON LONGER-TERM US-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS.

4. YOU SHOULD LEAVE WITH ROMULO ON AN INFORMAL BASIS A COPY OF THE TALKING POINTS BELOW. DELIVERING A FORMAL, WRITTEN DEMARCHE APPEARS LIKELY TO BE LESS PRODUCTIVE AND MORE PROVOCATIVE THAN AN ORAL APPROACH BUT WE WISH TO BE SURE THAT ROMULO CONVEYS THE TALKING POINTS ACCURATELY TO MARCOS.

5. TEXT OF TALKING POINTS FOLLOWS:

-- BECAUSE OF YOUR DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES AND YOUR LONG EXPERIENCE WITH THE COURSE OF US-PHILIPPINE
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RELATIONS, I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY SECRETARY VANCE TO CONVEY TO YOU THE THOUGHTS OF MY GOVERNMENT ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. AS YOU KNOW, AMBASSADOR NEWSOM HAS DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS, AS HE HAS WITH YOU, THE IMPORTANCE THE USG ATTACHES TO PLACING THIS RELATIONSHIP ON A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AND EQUITABLE LONG-TERM BASIS WHICH WILL ENABLE FUTURE COOPERATION, IN A NEW ERA, TO BE AS CLOSE AS IT HAS BEEN SO OFTEN IN THE PAST. PRESIDENT CARTER CONVEYED THIS MESSAGE PERSONALLY TO YOU AND MRS. MARCOS IN NEW YORK, AND BY LETTER TO PRESIDENT MARCOS. IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER ASKED VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE TO VISIT THE PHILIPPINES, A VISIT INTENDED TO ENHANCE FURTHER THE RELATIONSHIP AND DEMONSTRATE IT CLEARLY TO THE PHILIPPINE AND AMERICAN PEOPLE. IT WAS ALSO IN THIS SPIRIT THAT WE UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT MARCOS' STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS NEW POLICY OF NORMALIZATION.

-- AS EXPLAINED TO AMBASSADOR NEWSOM, PRESIDENT MARCOS' IDEAS FOR NORMALIZATION WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION AND WERE WELCOMED BY THE UNITED STATES. WE HAD BELIEVED AND HAD SO STATED

PUBLICLY THAT THERE HAD BEEN PROGRESS BOTH CONCERNING TREATMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND MOVEMENT TOWARD GREATER PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT PROCESSES. RECOGNIZING THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE UNIQUE PHILIPPINE SITUATION, THE COURAGE OF PRESIDENT MARCOS IN DECIDING TO HOLD THE FIRST ELECTIONS SINCE 1972 WAS SEEN AS MANIFESTATION OF HIS STATED DESIRE TO MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION AND AWAY FROM MARTIAL LAW.

--AS AMBASSADOR NEWSOM TOLD PRESIDENT MARCOS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, WE WELCOMED HIS IDEA OF ELECTIONS BUT WE WERE IN NO WAY INVOLVED IN THEM. WE DID NOT INTERFERE IN ANY WAY. IN FACT, WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN RELATIVELY ORDERLY MANNER AND WITHOUT THE DISORDERS AND BLOODSHED THAT CHARACTERIZED ELECTIONS DURING

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THE "OLD SOCIETY" DAYS. WE REGRETTED THE ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT AND FAVORITISM WHICH WERE MADE DURING THE CAMPAIGN BUT WE UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF CAMPAIGN RHETORIC.

--WHAT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THIS COUNTRY ARE THE REPORTS OF INTIMIDATION AND ARRESTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE ELECTIONS. SUCH ACTS OF POLITICAL RETRIBUTION WILL NOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY AMERICAN PUBLIC OR CONGRESS EVEN IF EXPLAINED ON GROUNDS OF TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS OF PHILIPPINE LAW AND/OR POLITICAL PERSUASION. AMERICANS BELIEVE FAIR TREATMENT AND DUE PROCESS OF LAW SHOULD BE ACCORDED TO ALL, AND THAT SWEEPING GOVERNMENT VICTORY IN ELECTIONS CALLS FOR MAGNANIMOUS POST-ELECTION POLICIES ON PART OF GOP.

--AS FOREIGN MINISTER ROMULO AND PRESIDENT MARCOS WELL KNOW, THERE IS KEEN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST CONCERNING MAJOR EVENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES, GIVEN THE LONG AND CLOSE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. REPORTS SUCH AS THESE CANNOT BUT HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE EFFORTS WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN MAKING TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP, AS THEY MAKE IT APPEAR THAT THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION HAS BEEN ABANDONED OR REVERSED. (FYI. AT THIS POINT YOU SHOULD REMIND ROMULO THAT HE, ABOVE ALL, KNOWS SO WELL HOW EVENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES EFFECT THE IMAGE OF HIS COUNTRY IN THE UNITED STATES. HE WAS PRESENT IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON WHEN THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL WAS MADE SENTENCING AQUINO TO DEATH AND HE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THE NEGATIVE IMPACT. HE REMARKED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOK IN WASHINGTON LAST OCTOBER WHAT A MISTAKE THE GOP ACTION HAD BEEN IN TERMS OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. END FYI).

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--CONGRESSIONAL REACTIONS WILL CERTAINLY BE NEGATIVE AND WILL MAKE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE U.S.-GOP RELATIONS. (FYI. YOU SHOULD SEEK SOME OTHER APPROPRIATE MEANS TO REMIND THE GOP THAT THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ARE MAKING JUDGMENTS IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS ON SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR ALL COUNTRIES, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL, DISAPPROVAL OR REDUCTION IN LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

ROMULO SHOULD RECALL THE PROBLEMS WHICH AROSE LAST YEAR IN THIS REGARD AND THE ATTITUDE AT THAT TIME OF EVEN CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE GOP. THE ABILITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO ARGUE ON BEHALF OF THE GOP WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE SITUATION THERE. END FYI.)

-- UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT HAS BEEN OUR EARNEST HOPE THAT ONCE ELECTIONS WERE OVER PRESIDENT MARCOS' COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION AND GREATER RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE REAFFIRMED. THIS WOULD CREATE A PROPITIOUS CLIMATE FOR A VISIT BY VP MONDALE AND EASE CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN. THE NEWS OF LARGE SCALE ARRESTS, INCLUDING CANDIDATES IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER ACTS, SUCH AS EXPULSION OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS AS TO THE DIRECTION OF EVENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND AS TO THE SITUATION THAT WOULD EXIST DURING A VP VISIT. THUS WE WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH A VERY CLOSE DIALOGUE ON THE SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND HOW IT MAY AFFECT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TRIP. (FYI: E.G. THE ATMOSPHERE OF HIS VISIT WOULD BE POSITIVE IF THOSE ARRESTED ON APRIL 8 WERE NO LONGER IN JAIL AND THE MUCH MORE RESTRICTIVE MEASURES RECENTLY APPLIED WERE NO LONGER IN FORCE.)

6. AS AN ADDITIONAL POINT YOU SHOULD TELL ROMULO THAT FOR THE MOMENT WE ARE HOLDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON THE

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SITUATION TO A MINIMUM, DESPITE THE HIGH LEVEL OF CONCERN. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD TELL ROMULO THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO THIS FOR LONG ABSENT SOME INDICATION OF A LESS RIGID GOP ATTITUDE. VANCE

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